The next issue of CHALLENGE will appear in three weeks, after which we will resume our regular biweekly schedule.

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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHA POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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2024: AGAINST GENOCIDE AND CAPITALISM, WE WILL WIN

2024 was the year of the genocide where we witnessed the sharpening of imperialist wars and a system spiral further into decay. On Page 1: from left to right Palestine rally and mass DNC demonstrations where PL'ers gave political leadership from New York City to Chicago.

Vladimir Lenin once said "There are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks when decades happen." As 2024 comes to a close we can safely say that we are living in a time where decades are happening.

The human race and the world have lived under capitalism, where bosses control all resources and use them for profit instead of humankind, for about 300 years now. History shows us that capitalism inevitably has periods of utter chaos caused by the bosses' insatiable desire for profit. In the last century this has meant multiple World Wars. The period of United States domination is coming to a close and China and its allies are looking increasingly ready to challenge for this spot as top dog in yet another global massacre,world war. Regardless of which set of bosses wins in such a conflict, workers will die in the millions (or even billions!) and end up in the same state of exploitation as before.

That is unless we, the working class, have a fighting communist party with billions of workers capable of turning the guns of war away from workers and towards our capitalist rulers. We can then put control of the world in the hands of the working class once and for all.

2024 has been a year of building Progressive Labor Party to be that party. PLP members have been leading and standing alongside workers fighting back against attacks on our class, whether declining conditions, increasing racism or rising fascism. And we have done this while putting communist politics first, raising class consciousness, and increasing Party membership while also expanding our base.

Inter-imperialist rivalry

Every day this year has seen the United States-NATO alliance and its proxies become more entangled with their rivals China and Russia, and it is becoming increasingly clear that the United States imperialists are not in control.

2024 has seen the unceasing genocide of workers in Gaza by the U.S. attack dog, Israel. Israel's ruling class is foaming at the mouth with nationalism, racism, and visions of imperial plunder. The United States needs Israel to project its own power in the Middle East but seems to have lost control over its ally who increasingly isolates itself worldwide, while also threatening to pull countries like Iran and Lebanon into a conflict the U.S. is not prepared for. This as Syria is once again in civil war and the U. S. does not even appear to have a role, as admitted by elected capitalist stooge Donald Trump.

In Europe the war between Russia and Ukraine continues with U.S. rival Russia slowly gaining ground (BBC, 12/6), with over 200,000 deaths and several

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JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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OUR FIGHT

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.
While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Assad regime falls, greater war looms

After a 54-year reign of state terror and a 12-year civil war, Syria's gangster Bashar al-Assad's regime collapsed after a siege of just 11 days. As opposing forces, led by the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and backed by Turkey, took control of the capital city of Damascus, a volatile situation in the Middle East became even more precarious.

After Israel obliterated Syria's military infrastructure from the air and reportedly moved ground forces as close as 15 miles from Damascus (cnn.com, 12/11), the U.S. rushed additional troops to the country (Newsweek, 12/11). With tens of millions of workers caught between rival capitalists and their ruthless drive for profit, the potential for this latest upheaval to trigger an all-out regional war—and even world war—is a real danger. With tens of millions of workers caught between rival capitalists and their ruthless drive for profit, the potential for this latest upheaval to trigger an all-out regional war—and even world war—is a real danger.

As a critical crossroads in the region with the world's richest reserves of oil and gas, sitting between Iran and Israel, Syria for decades has been a centerpiece in the constant fight among the biggest imperialist powers. After a quarter-century of French colonial rule and a series of coups, the two-generation Assad regime seized power in 1970. It quickly aligned with the Soviet Unión—which had already slid back to capitalism—and positioned itself as a counter to U.S. power in the region. Both Hafez al-Assad (the father) and Bashar al-Assad (the son) brutally suppressed any opposition, gassing and bombing workers and children. In 2012, a full-scale civil war broke out, with a host of anti-Assad factions backed by the U.S., Turkey, and Al Qaeda, where HTS originated. Russia and Iran came to the military aid of Assad and managed to keep his despised regime afloat.

But in recent years, the big picture has shifted. After a string of military failures from Vietnam to Afghanistan and Iraq, and with the rise of the Chinese ruling class, the U.S. has declined as a world power. Russia is focused on its war in Ukraine, while Iran has been weakened by U.S. sanctions, its ongoing war with Israel, and the decimation of Hezbollah, the Iran-aligned militia based in Lebanon. Seeing the power vacuum in Syria, HTS set its sights on toppling Assad—with significant help from Turkey, which is eager to kick out three million Syrian refugees (AP, 12/9), weaken the U.S.-backed Kurdish opposition on the Turkish border, and became a bigger player in the Middle East.

The old U.S.-dominated, liberal world order is dying. A fundamental reshaping has been set into motion. As the imperialist bosses' competition intensifies, war is inevitable. History shows that it's the only way they can settle their disagreements; it's the very nature of the profit system. But workers have no stake or allegiance in this vicious fight among capitalists. The bosses are ready and willing to sacrifice millions of workers' lives to keep themselves in power. It's up to us to turn the guns around! Only a mass working-class revolution and a communist society can end this deadly cycle.

These rebels are not revolutionaries

Depending on their agenda, the bosses' media have called the groups that ousted Assad either "rebels" or "terrorists." In fact, they are small-time capitalists who have built a mass base by providing some security with a brand of religious fundamentalism—and, most significantly, by crushing any opposition (BBC, 12/10). We need to remember that not all rebels are revolutionaries! The anti-Assad opposition has controlled one third of Syria for the last 10 years. Like Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, they have oppressed and exploited the workers in these areas for their own benefit. Progressive Labor Party calls on the international working class to not be fooled by these junior gangsters who—along with the Assad regime—are responsible for the slaughter of more than half a million people in a country of 23 million (aljazeera.com, 12/2/23).

The lightning fall of Assad in Syria caught the imperialists by surprise. No one seemed to anticipate how easily the Syrian military would fold and Assad would fall. Now all of the bosses, big and small, are scrambling to grab what they can and to protect their own interests. As we go to press, Israel launched over 480 air strikes in Syria to terrorize the population and destroy what's left of the Syrian military before HTS could use it. Both the Israeli and Turkish militaries have entered Syria and expanded their direct control over parts of the country (Guardian, 12/10). While Iran has withdrawn for the moment, Russia has declared it will keep its naval and air bases in Syria and defend them against any attack (New York Times, 12/10).

Once again, Syria is the place where capitalist powers have converged to fight for control. It seems unlikely that the latest developments will mark the end of war there, and more likely that they could herald a much wider battle. As the world saw with the initial fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001 and the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003, what seems to be happening at first may not be the way things end up. While we can't predict how or when or where the bosses' dogfights will escalate into a global conflict, we can be confident of one thing: A united, international working class with communist leadership cannot be defeated!

U.S. bosses' split adds more chaos

The disarray within the U.S. ruling class adds another level of chaos to the crisis in Syria. One big difference between President-Elect Donald Trump and the big finance capitalists fronted by the Democratic Party is over the role of the U.S. military. Seeking to lower their tax burden, the domestic-based bosses backing Trump have long sought to let other countries deploy costly ground forces in the Middle East while the U.S. uses the threat of bombs and nuclear weapons to protect their interests. By contrast, the finance capitalists—the multinational oil companies and the banks that finance them—recognize that U.S. imperialism relies on military control over the flow of oil and gas to their competitors.

Trump sent a shock wave through the main wing's board rooms by declaring that the U.S. has no interest in any involvement in Syria and would let the factions fight it out among themselves (NYT, 12/8). He seemed to forget that 900 U.S. soldiers are stationed in the country to protect oil wells under Kurdish control.

A communist opportunity

We live in a period of looming world war and rising fascism, which the capitalists will need to force the working class onto the battlefield. We also live in a period of tremendous opportunity for our class. Historically, workers have turned world war into class war. We can build a better world if the working class seizes the future by organizing for communist revolution.

None of the factions in Syria serve the interests of the working class. All of them represent competing imperialists and regional powers. Workers in Syria and beyond deserve a world where we own, share, and run all of society—a communist world. A world without borders, and without migrants fleeing the bosses' terror. In short, workers deserve communism. We call on all workers to choose each other to keep us safe in these perilous times—to choose a communist future.

In the face of attacks, we're driven to organize!

Public transportation is the life blood of every major city globally, and millions depend on it. It is also a major employer of Black workers who make up about 40 percent of the U.S. transit industry, and 47 percent here in New York City (Gothamist, 2/28/23).

Racist transit bosses can't fix subway

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)'s New York City Transit fare has risen to $2.90, as a way for the transit bosses to gouge more money from workers. Which isn't only a racist attack on workers by harassing and profiling Black and Latin workers, but it also stands as a method to divide transit workers and the ridership. This method has led to the anger towards this capitalist system to be directed at transit workers. When capitalism is in crisis, the ruling class has no real answer to the racist unemployment, lack of housing, mental health, and drug addiction ailments their system creates. In response to the bosses' lack of safety after a conductor was brutally slashed in the neck, train operators and conductors stuck back by refusing to operate their trains in February, causing mass service disruptions on several subway lines for a day (New York Times, 2/29)!

Union hangs workers to dry

The bosses used their state power to deploy 1,000 state police and National Guard to patrol the subway in response to these anti-social attacks (Politico, 3/7). The Transportation Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 saw this as a victory and requested more cops to patrol the platforms in the stations. This has only led to more attacks on our class. In September, transit cops shot four people in a Brooklyn subway station over a Black worker not paying $2.90. One of the bystanders shot now has permanent brain damage. This proves two things: when workers want safety, the bosses will only use that safety to protect their rule and the racist cops they claim are here to protect are prepared to kill workers to protect that rule.

The transit union has a long history of leading workers into the bosses' hands, which is the path into further poverty. Our current contract has left us with 3 percent raises which don't keep up with inflation and a new way to deduct money from workers if they are sick and want to work overtime, but worst of all they have changed our medical insurance once we retire. Medicare Advantage is what the bosses have instituted to replace traditional Medicare. Medicare Advantage leaves retired workers paying more into their medical with hidden fees. The workers now are also the majority under Tier 6 which caps what we can earn towards our pensions. On top of all of this, many of us in different departments have had our overtime cut, and there has been a surge of non-unionized subcontract workers doing the jobs that were once ours.

Direct engagement with workers

I have recently joined with a union opposition candidate running for union president against the current leadership. I'm trying to see how I can use this as a way to organize workers to strike back and hopefully fight for a communist revolution.

Running against the TWU union leadership has reminded me of lessons from past struggles I've learned: No one running for union president can be trusted. If you're choosing to fight back, you can't leave anything for the union or bosses to use against you. Working with the aspiring union leadership makes workers question your motives, but campaigning has offered an opportunity to organize the workers.

Over the course of the last 7 years all these attacks and struggles had been slow and frustrating. Our transit comrades have been base building and struggling with other workers to take action. As our union election comes to an end we have been bringing our line to the forefront of organizing by incorporating the U.S. presidential election result. Stating to the workers that the ruling class only cares about their interests and they will use us however to achieve their goals however wins. Which is the same for this union election.

We are in a great position now to organize the workers. This will be the first anti racist anti sexist transit worker meeting with over 40 members willing to join. The plan is to start in one department and bring all the other departments close to a dozen into the fold, sharing information, struggles and actions! This is very inspiring and exciting and it's only the beginning.

I've been going out to different quarters collecting names and numbers of workers willing to fight back by starting workers' meetings. I've gotten close to 40 contacts so far, with the enthusiasm ranging from "I don't give a f***" attitude to "Thanks for bringing the hope." Many workers are very cynical and don't trust me, at least not until I give them a reason to. I've told them that these meetings will be built on antiracism and antisexism with the purpose of getting strike ready. I've told the candidate who I'm campaigning for that during our campaigning we need to fight for the workers now and not wait until later. She said,"We Can't do anything until we get into power." Spoken like a true scheming boss. So I've made it a point to tell the workers it doesn't matter who wins this election; if we're not organized, then we've already lost. The election results are due back by the end of the month. Worker meetings will kick off in January. I'll keep y'all updated. Power to the working class!

Smash racist deportations—working people have no nations!

NYC, December 1 – Trump was elected in large part, on the promise of carrying out mass deportations of migrant workers and their families, refugees seeking some safety from terrorists, civil wars, climate disasters, drug cartels and more. Basically, seeking higher ground from the perils of imperialist rivalries. While Obama and Biden have carried out their own mass deportations, and Biden and Harris sealed the border and told refugees, "Don't come here," Trump's "America First" campaign of open racism and xenophobia won the votes of more than 75 million people, a big goose-step on the road to fascism straight out of Hitler's playbook.

This affects us all directly, from high school teachers and students, college students and professors, workers on almost every job. Every Progressive Labor Party collective must prepare to confront mass deportations and the use of the military with international solidarity, boldness, and bravery in the face of fascist terror. This is "how the steel is tempered."

Small Fascist Trump to out-goosestep Obama's deportation plan?

Trump appointed Tom Homan as "border czar" and Stephen Miller as his deputy chief of staff. These two were the architects of Trump's previous family separation policy, which involved tearing children away from their families at the border. This time, they are promising to cancel the temporary protected status for millions of immigrants from Haiti and Afghanistan, and use the National Guard to carry out mass arrests of immigrants, confining them in military camps as part of an "historic deportation operation." Although he once proposed ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which protects young people brought to the United States, Trump—both a Small Fascist (see glossary on page 6) and a big hypocrite—claims he is open to working with Democrats to preserve the law, even as he threatens to overturn birthright citizenship. This would mean that children of immigrant or migrant workers born in the U.S. would no longer automatically receive citizenship (AP News, 12/9).

Recently my union, the National Writers Union (NWU), set up a committee to respond to these threats, based on what we were able to do during Trump's first term. Back then journalists covering the border crisis in Mexico had their devices seized and copied before being allowed to return to the U.S. NWU organized an International Committee and sent members directly into the fight. At the time we were in UAW Region 9A, and this became an issue among its 45,000 members. The UAW leadership tried to get in front of this and decided to subsidize travel for any member who wanted to go to the border to help in the crisis.

Labor united against anti-immigrant racism

We worked closely with New Sanctuary City and participated in escorting workers to their asylum hearings, helping to fill out asylum applications, and took part in mass rallies to close the immigrant detention centers and stop deportations. When Trump threatened to target sanctuary cities, NWU convened a meeting of representatives from ten unions, including RWDSU, LiUNA, 32BJ, PSC, NYSNA, 1199 and others to develop a labor rapid response to any mass roundups in NYC. We are going to try to renew and expand this work to Los Angeles, Tucson, and Springfield, Ohio, raising the issue within other local unions and Central Labor Councils.

Some Party collectives are already immersed in mass organizations doing this kind of work. We can all learn from them. Every Party collective must develop a plan, a way to respond to the coming crisis. The workers are not going to roll over and play dead for Trump, he is in for a fight. The more we are involved in this struggle, leading with our revolutionary politics, the more we can build PLP and become more of a force in the class struggle. All hands on deck!

Party celebrates Bolshevik Revolution

CHICAGO, November 16 -- "I will build for revolution by fighting racism." "I will build for revolution by fighting for unions to be led by communists." These were a couple of the pledges that workers shared during the conclusion of our annual Bolshevik Revolution celebration this evening in a local fieldhouse. This event celebrated the first time in history where workers, with communist leadership, seized state power from the capitalist class in the year 1917. Its monumental impact spread far and wide, as other workers around the world were inspired to rise up and fight back. We are still seeing the inspiration and power of the Bolshevik Revolution today and carry on its revolutionary fight through the international communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP).

Revolutionary lessons, past and present

It was an inspiring program, kicked off with a comrade reading the classic poem "Good Morning, Revolution" from communist artist Langston Hughes. Next came a skit where Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin was transported to the present day to offer advice to youth on the daily work and discipline needed to build the mass movement for revolution.

We heard about historical class struggle inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution, including when soldiers refused to continue fighting for the German imperialists as well as an uprising by workers in Egypt that won them independence from British colonial rule. There were enthusiastic table discussions about inspiring collective action that workers had taken part in. Young workers who happened to be passing through the fieldhouse after a nearby event even stopped to check out the program, liking what they heard!

Workers come together for fightback

Comrades who have been facing censorship in the American Public Health Association for speaking out about the genocide in Gaza did a report back on their bold action during this this year's conference (see CHALLENGE, 11/27). Led by comrades from the PLP, workers from across the country organized to protest outside the convention and march through the convention hall. Other workers who happened to be in the hall were inspired to join the march. Workers are ready to join a movement that will fight back. These comrades showed our fellow workers that following the bosses' rules will never achieve anything meaningful and the importance of banding together with other workers.

With attacks on workers from all sides and the ruling class moving us closer to an imperialist war, the lessons of the Bolshevik Revolution and knowing what workers taking state power can accomplish are more important than ever. In their keynote speech, a veteran PL'er offered wisdom and inspiration:

"I want to focus on the beauty of revolution. Many times we think about death, destruction, misery, or pain and yes, that's a part of it but it's what we do it for. Why would we go through such a thing and the Bolshevik Revolution showed us. The aftermath of that revolution showed us what a glimpse of what the world could be if the working class was in power under communist principles and leadership."

"Women were given the right to divorce. Racism was outlawed in the Soviet Union. They created new art forms to promote pro working-class culture. The Bolsheviks focused on unifying the workers. We have to commit ourselves to rebuilding the only movement that can get our class free, a communist movement, a movement led by Progressive Labor Party that will get our class liberated from the terror, from the genocide, from the racism, from the sexism of global capitalism. The capitalists are taking our world to hell in a handbasket and there is not a lesser evil. That means we have to commit ourselves to be the alternative. We have to join Progressive Labor Party if we are not in it yet and if you are in it, we have to recommit ourselves to building an army to take state power once again, so that our class can once again experience the beauty of communist revolution."

Communist culture inspires the masses

We capped off our celebration by singing the communist anthem "The Internationale," which got the multiracial crowd of workers and youth on their feet. While the racist bosses want to spread fear and division among the international working class, we communists want to spread revolutionary culture that motivates the masses to unite, stand up and fight back – Join us!

Johns Hopkins

Students, community protest thugs for capital

A mixed group of Johns Hopkins students and community members gathered Wednesday evening to protest Johns Hopkins University's (JHU) Police Accountability Board meeting. This group would oversee the private police force of JHU, which students, faculty, and community members have been strongly against since 2018.

One member of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) and a friend to the Party joined the rally in front of the university's Public Safety Office. We continued with a march around the neighborhood that ended at Wyman Park. The official meeting was hosted on Zoom, which was decided based on claims of death threats to board members. The panelists droned on about community-based policies and feedback, but the protest's organizers had a clever plan. Speakers could use pre-made speeches to call out the board's hypocrisy and link to oppressing workers through this proposed police force. Some spoke freely, whether giving their personal experiences on campus with profiling or stating that a private police force echoes the use of police across the world: protection of property and worker suppression.

The West Coalition, an organization fighting for police accountability and the end of police violence, joined later. Tawanda Jones, the group's lead organizer, also bashed the board's claims of community safety and gave specific examples of police terror in Baltimore. She laid out her personal battle with the city's government since her brother was killed by 17 officers in 2013. Capitalist fact is truly stranger than fiction. Tawanda's experience with the (in)justice system proves that working in the system is as threatening as working against it. Any opposition to police terror is only met with more attacks and threats to our safety.

One organizer made a clear reflection of the meeting, saying, "[E]very time we attend one of these meetings, their brazen complicity with a plan that will undoubtedly lead to terrible violence is even more and more obvious."

PLP supports and recognizes the bold actions of the Hopkins student-led protests over the years. Tonight clearly showed that there are people in our community with political consciousness. It is our job as builders of a communist movement to sharpen that into a clear class consciousness. That is what's needed to shut down any of JHU's attempts to create a private police force of terror and build toward a broader shut down of Baltimore's capitalist thieves.

Yes, but why call it 'communism'?

The following is an excerpt of a Progressive Labor Party pamphlet. To read the rest please visit https://plp.org/key-documents/key-document/12602-why-we-fight-for-communism-2

"I agree with a lot of your ideas. But why do you have to call it communism? If you would just use a different word, you could get more people to support the PLP."

Many people have read Challenge-Desafio, have spoken with members of the PLP, worked together with PLP members, and fought against the evils of capitalism alongside PLP members. And many people ask the question: "Why do you use the word "communism?"

The capitalist rulers, their schools and media, attack communism and blame it for everything bad in the world. Furthermore, some people and groups who really support the policies of capitalism have sometimes used the words of communism to fool people. And genuine communists have made some mistakes also. But the struggle for communism represents the hope for the working class of all nations to build a world free from exploitation, which means a world free from racism, sexism, hunger, police terror, and war! Why do we use the word "communism?" Because that is the word that best expresses this struggle. Communism means an end to the capitalist profit system, and communism means an end to all forms of class exploitation and inequality. Besides, if we didn't call ourselves communists, the capitalists would still call us "communists" and accuse us of hiding it! Or they'd call us "terrorists" or some other word. We are part of a struggle that goes back thousands of years.

Background to Communism

For hundreds of thousands of years, humans lived without economic classes-- a society without government, laws, or private property. This period is called "primitive communism." We call it "communism" because there were no classes, but we call it "primitive" because it was not based on collective struggle and collective science. Eventually groups accumulated power and wealth and organized society into classes. One result of this was more development of science and technology.

Around 500 years ago, capitalism began to develop more rapidly. Capitalism is the most direct form of class exploitation, where the ruling class exploits the laboring class in order to make maximum profits as quickly as possible. As capitalism developed, so did modern racism. Capitalism is very unstable and needs to make profits as quickly as possible. One way they do this is to divide the laboring classes into different sections so that they can exploit certain sections extra hard. We call this "super-exploitation", and it is the basis for modern slavery and modern racism. This racism was especially intense against slaves kidnapped from Africa, but it was also used against people from other places as well.

Capitalism came to dominate the world during the 1800's and brought with it more economic and social crises. Two men from Germany — Karl Marx and Frederick Engels —studied economics, politics, and history from the point of view of the working class and wrote The Communist Manifesto in 1848. Marx and Engels pointed out that all class societies are dictatorships because the ruling class will always use the law, prisons, and violence to maintain its rule. Marx said that capitalist dictatorship -- the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie had to be replaced by a society run by the working class--the dictatorship of the proletariat. After many years of creating an economy, an educational system, and a culture without exploitation, eventually all of humanity would understand that true egalitarian communism is the best way to organize human society.

Communism versus Capitalism

The capitalist bosses immediately declared communism their number one enemy! Communists were active in the labor movement, in the movement against slavery and racism, and in movements against the oppression of women. Communists were not for reforming capitalism or just trying to help one particular group. Communists said that the whole capitalist system had to be destroyed and a classless society based on "From each according to ability, to each according to need" be set up.

In 1871, the capitalists of France were at war against the capitalists of Germany. The working class of Paris rose up in revolution against capitalism and set up a system of socialism as a step towards communism. Power and wealth were taken out of the hands of the rich by the working class. For two months the working class ran Paris effectively and humanely, with crime way down and people's needs taken care of.The Russian Revolution

In 1917 the capitalist world was again at war. In Russia, a revolutionary communist movement (the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin) organized a revolution and set up socialism in the USSR. Lenin and others realized that the working class needed an organized communist party to develop communist theory and organize the struggle. Today, PLP, with branches worldwide, is the Party rebuilding the international communist revolution— All we need is YOU—Join today!

What Happened to Revolution?

Today we hear that communism is dead, because capitalism has taken over the former USSR and Eastern Europe. What happened? It wasn't the capitalists that defeated the communists. It was because the communist movement made some mistakes. This should not be a surprise. After all, the Russian and Chinese revolutions were the first time in the history of the world that the working class took control and tried to set up a world based on no exploitation. The communists set up a system of socialism as a halfway step to communism. Socialism allowed some inequalities to go on, with the excuse that they would be eliminated later.

Socialism also sometimes supported nationalism and other forms of anti-communist, selfish philosophy. Does this mean that communism must always fail because of "human nature?" Of course not! It is capitalism that is failing all over the world, with increased racism, police terror and the rise of more fascism, hunger, disease, and many small wars that will lead to bigger wars. Communism is needed more than ever, and more than ever, the working class of the world is looking for solutions.

We say: "The only solution is communist revolution!" PLP is not a closed party of experts. PLP is the tool of the working class -- tens of millions of working class people from all over the world must join the PLP and help lead it, to shape it into the tool which will end capitalism once and for all and establish a world free from exploitation, racism, terror and war!

What we fight for

The former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China many years ago. Capitalism, not communism, is failing all over the world.

The two-stage strategy of first socialism, then communism, failed to lead to communism. It led back to capitalism. Therefore, we must fight directly for communism.

Communism means abolishing nation states, which are an expression of capitalism. One working class, one party, one world

Communism means abolishing racism by building multi-racial unity and internationalism.

Communism means abolishing sexism.

Communism means equality. No money. No wages. People working based on their commitment to each other and to building a communist society. Just as we do now in the Party.

Communism means the Party leads society. Millions of workers-eventually everybody-must be won to be communist organizers for this to work. We must all give and receive leadership from each other.

Communism can be won only through armed struggle by masses of workers, soldiers, students and others, to destroy the dictatorship of the capitalist class and set up a dictatorship of the working class.

Fight for Communism!

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

BX: students hungry for class struggle

Our fall semester is almost over but students and workers all over the Bronx (and the rest of New York too!) have been active in the class struggle, alongside members and guided by the politics of Progressive Labor Party (PLP). Our two main issues have been the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the fact that the two community colleges in the Bronx, which serve primarily Black and Latin students, have gone more than a year without a cafeteria. One of our main messages has been to connect these two things by showing that imperialist war –an essential part of modern capitalism – means that there's less money for education. We've collected signatures on a petition, organized a Palestine-solidarity film festival and participated in some great marches and demonstrations. Most importantly, some students attended the PLP College Conference where the need for a worker-student alliance and a revolutionary party to lead the working class was discussed. Throughout the semester, CHALLENGE has been ever-present, getting into the hands of hundreds of students and workers – who we see as hundreds of potential new members of the Party. As we head toward finals, our fighting spirit is high! At one campus we're ending the semester by calling out the President in public for failing to provide a cafeteria and the students are here for it!

For thanksgiving, we raised consciousness against genocide

For this year's Thanksgiving holiday, a group of CUNY students and faculty in our PLP club had no plans. At the last minute, we learned about and joined a bus trip to Plymouth Rock, sponsored by a Brooklyn-based community organization of workers from Haiti. Plymouth is the site of the 1620 Mayflower landings and one of British capitalism's first successful colonies, and today is the site of the annual "National Day of Mourning" ceremony. The ceremony and protest were multiracial, attended by hundreds of indigenous workers from the U.S., Canada and Mexico, alongside mostly Black workers and a variety of young pro-Palestine youth.

These workers and youth stood in the pouring cold rain hearing speeches from indigenous and Palestinian youth, connecting the past and present European and U.S. genocide of indigenous civilizations with the U.S.' genocide of Black, Arab and Palestinian workers. One militant young indigenous woman leader, after movingly summarizing the list of U.S. imperialism's crimes and connecting them with anti-Black racism and police terror in the U.S., named the ultimate cause of all oppression: capitalism, with revolution as the solution.

Despite these strengths every speaker missed a class analysis of capitalism, and could not identify international workers' power for communism as the solution. And with communist politics absent, the call for revolution was quickly submerged and confused with capitalist ideas of nationalism, identity politics like supporting small Black/ indigenous capitalists, and religion, exemplified by the emphasis on prayer and nationalist flags of Palestine, Lebanon and various Black nationalist flags in the crowd.

The next day, we visited Harvard University, and as one of the CUNY students writes:

Harvard lives up to its reputation and my expectations, with grandiose structures and buildings that exactly flaunt its "old-money" status. Our group was small, and we were short on time, but we distributed CHALLENGE nonetheless. Reactions were mixed, with a majority being negative. Many were simply shocked, but we did manage to distribute a decent amount of newpapers!

It's likely that most of the students with a working class background have some understanding of class, as they're surrounded by actual children of the bourgeoisie but there needs to be an organized and committed Party club to expose the reality of deep inequality and false meritocracy to win the students to fight for the working class and not be the future stooges or members of the capitalist class.

If I learned anything, it would be that it reinforced the idea that we need better organization and greater commitment. Had we a larger group and more time, we could have seized space and had a greater presence and really disrupt the square.

Glossary

Capitalists compete by any means necessary. Much like smaller criminal gangs, different groups of capitalists battle one another to secure territory, resources, and exploitable labor–the basis of their profits.They have created the state as a mechanism to manage and protect this ruthless profit-driven system. Through laws, police, prisons, elections, the military, schools, the media, and other institutions, the bosses have built a dictatorship to keep themselves in power—and keep the working class out of power.

Fascism is a stage of late capitalism in crisis where the liberal democratic veil peels away to reveal a rotting dictatorship. The bosses use state terror to discipline their own class and enforce compliance by the working class–both essential conditions for waging global war. Fascism is marked by more direct and centralized rule, with intensified racism, sexism, and nationalism.

The Big Fascists are the dominant finance capitalists, principally the multinational banks and oil companies (JPMorganChase, ExxonMobil). They're trying to build a multiracial, patriotic coalition to back U.S. imperialism and protect their far-flung profits. This is the wing that plays the drums of World War III.

The **Small Fascists** are mostly domestically oriented capitalists, spearheaded by the Koch, Mercer, DeVos, and Coors families, along with Richard Mellon Scaife, Harry and Lynde Bradley, John Olin, Peter Thiel, Elon Musk, Rupert Murdoch and a cast of other billionaires. They want to cut taxes for short-term profits and are reluctant to invest in costly ground wars to defend the global U.S. empire. Their agenda includes a racist gutting of social services at home and a retreat from U.S. imperialist alliances, including NATO.

Scratch a liberal, find a capitalist apologist

AFT (American Federation of Teachers) union president Randi Weingarten has a fascinating talk for our friends in education. First she repeats what is now common: Kamala lost because the Democratic Party (DP) ignored workers' worsening life for 40 years.

Then Weingarten notes that 60 percent of high school grads do not go on to college. So she wants them all to get an education that develops "four skill sets [horrible technocratic phrase]: critical thinking, problem-solving, resilience and relationships." Sounds good. But what does she really mean? Go to Microsoft and other corporations and work up courses tailored to their desire! Fits the venue of her talk, Columbia University's graduate school of government.

We can realize those four humanistic needs ... only on the communist path.

Weingarten's specific politics, like those of the reporter, long-time social-democrat Harold Meyerson: "That's why unions are indispensable in the fight not just to win the working class's political support [that is, steer them into the DP], but to preserve and strengthen American democracy."

Organizing in the unions, yes. However, we can be bold and declare, U.S. democracy is capitalist oppression. We don't want to strengthen it. Our way out is to overthrow it. Replace it with our own machinery of rule, by us as well as for us.

Bella ciao, Rose!

Communist legacy lives on

Rose Rossi, beloved by many in the Bay Area and beyond, passed away this spring, leaving behind a legacy of dedication to building Progressive Labor Party (PLP) and advancing the struggle for communism. A groundbreaking technologist who made huge advances in the field of Natural Language, Rose fought for the working class and against racism from the time she was in high school. She marched with Martin Luther King in Selma, organized against the Vietnam War, and fought violent gutter racists in Progressive Labor Party's iconic Boston Summer Project of 1975. Her strong and unwavering commitment to antiracism, anti-imperialism, and anti-capitalism strengthened a multitude of struggles across decades.

Later in life, Rose expanded her focus to ecological justice work in Bayview Hunters Point in San Francisco. A committed basebuilder, her avid study of and expertise in the works of Marx and Lenin were invaluable to PLP clubs in the Bay Area and brought several members into the Party, strengthening its overall presence in California.

While Rose is dearly missed by those who love her, her material influence is still felt deeply and lives on. In studying CHALLENGE, Rose once remarked, "A good article always reminds us why it is necessary that we fight for communism…but often it's in the last paragraph. I think that should be reversed. We need to always say it first."

In other words, it is necessary to meet fellow workers in the struggle for communist revolution now. Because the moment can only be now, as the history of countless failed socialist and reformist movements has taught us.

That was the lesson our comrade left us, one that rings truer than ever today. The capitalist bosses' liberal democracy is now showing its true face. Genocides are live-streamed to workers held captive under crumbling empires lurching toward fascism. The earth heats to unbearable temperatures and the imperialists do nothing to stop their oppressive race to devastation. It is in these moments we must stand steadfast like our Rose, remembering to continue to build toward victory for our class, and having the humility and hope that a better future must be possible. Comrade Rose lived what she believed in a lifetime of telling the truth, never compromising or settling, always inspiring countless others. We must live by the principle of "Don't vote, revolt!" and take up the banner so lovingly and militantly carried by our passed-on elders. In all that we do, we promise to do you proud, Comrade Rose!

¡ROSE, PRESENTE!¡LA LUCHA SIGUE! ROSE, NEVER FORGOTTEN, THE FIGHT CONTINUES!

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Shooting of CEO shocks bosses as workers celebrate

The Daily News, 12/5–The fatal shooting of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson has triggered a wave of rage-filled reactions on social media, most of them expressing contempt and dissatisfaction with the health insurance industry he represented. Thompson was gunned down early Wednesday morning… "When you see the entire internet — left and right — united around one thing, and that is celebrating the death of a healthcare CEO, you have to ask 'Why?' and I don't think that has been discussed at all" … "There's no discussion of the systemic cruelty in our healthcare system, or the fact that thousands of Americans die because CEOS like [Thompson] and others deny essential life-saving care to Americans."

Turkish workers fight privatization

Duvar.English, 11/21–In Ankara, 500 workers at the Çayırhan Thermal Power Plant have locked themselves inside the mine in a protest against privatization plans…The privatization process for the plant began a month and a half ago..Workers [fear]...losing both their jobs and homes..miners stated they would continue their occupation inside the mine until their demands were acknowledged, while hundreds of workers and their families pledged to keep up their protests outside the mine… "We are migrant workers…All of us are migrants…"

Under capitalism, human rights don't extend to gold mine regions

BBC, 12/4–Dayane Leite never wanted to become a sex worker but at the age of 17 her husband died of a heart attack and she couldn't pay for the funeral. Her hometown, Itaituba…is at the heart of the country's illegal gold-mining trade, so a friend suggested raising the money by having sex with miners…"The women are seriously humiliated there. They may be slapped in the face and yelled at…While the environmental harm of the mines is well known, the human cost - which the UN says includes violence, sexual exploitation and trafficking - goes largely unreported…The three largest customers of Brazilian gold are Canada, Switzerland and the UK. More than 90% of all exports to Europe are from areas where illegal mining occurs…

Free speech becoming a memory at U.S. universities

NY Times, 11/25–Colleges and universities have tightened rules around protests, locked campus gates and handed down stricter punishments after the disruptions of pro-Palestinian demonstrations and encampments last spring. The efforts seem to be working. Universities have seen just under 950 protest events this semester so far, compared to 3,000 last semester… administrators have often enforced — to the letter — new rules created in response to last spring's unrest. The moves have created scenes that would have been hard to imagine previously, particularly at universities that once celebrated their history of student activism.

U.S. war planners ponder whether Trump can split China and Russia

Foreign Affairs, 12/6–"The one thing you never want to happen is you never want Russia and China uniting. I'm going to have to un-unite them"…Donald Trump boasted in an interview…early indications suggest that the coming administration might seek to damage the Chinese-Russian partnership by reducing tensions… with Moscow in order to put pressure on Beijing…Michael Waltz…whom Trump has tapped to serve as his national security adviser, advocated…for the United States to help wind down the war in Ukraine…and… divert resources to "countering the greater threat from the Chinese Communist Party"...Russia has become very dependent on China economically, with 40 percent of Russian imports coming from China and 30 percent of Russian exports going there…This dependence is deepening…

Protesters fight against French-Israeli imperialism

WIVB4.com, 11/14–Protests erupted in Paris on Wednesday against a controversial gala organized by far-right figures in support of Israel. The event, intended to raise funds for the Israeli military, included Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich among its invited guests…Smotrich, a vocal advocate of Israeli settlements, had been expected to attend Wednesday's gala, dubbed "Israel is Forever," which was planned by an association of the same name. The group's stated goal is to "mobilize French-speaking Zionist forces"... On Wednesday night, several hundred protesters marched through central Paris, denouncing the event as a "gala of hatred and shame."

2024

YEAR OF GENOCIDE AND FIGHTBACK

Photos: PL'ers militantly protesting and injecting communist leadership at the Republican National Convention and brandishing our red line against a system that has no red lines nor limits to how far it will go to put profits over workers lives.

Continued from page 1

times that amount wounded. The domestically focused small fascists (see Glossary, page 6) like Trump do not even want to continue arming Ukraine, but the big fascist imperialists, still fronted by Joe Biden, do not want to lose their international influence. They are desperately sending aid to Ukraine as fast as possible and gave Ukraine approval to use longer range U.S.-supplied missiles inside Russia. The United States's ruling class is not even united as they lose ground in multiple continents.

Armed conflict runs riot all over Africa. Haiti has been virtually left to gang rule. Workers in South America deal with murderous drug gangs and the fascist states vying against them for power. Rulers world wide struggle to choose between what side to choose in the developing world war.

A year of building the Party

As the world situation deteriorates Progressive Labor Party believes that no set of bosses: not the U.S. bosses, not the Chinese bosses, not the Israeli bosses or Hamas, not the Republicans or the Democrats, are any kind of solution for the working class. Every day we must be organizing with workers out in the streets, at our jobs and in mass organizations to build working class fightback and build this Party! 2024 has been a year of doing just that.

PLP stood with workers and students all over the United States and protested the genocide in Gaza. PL'ers led marches, distributed thousands of CHALLENGES, and held teach-ins and cadre schools. We fought back when teachers who taught students about the genocide were fired. When workers and students held encampments in universities across the country, PL'ers were there. We fought alongside workers but also made the point that workers cannot allow themselves to be won toward nationalism of any stripe as world war approaches.

Party organizers and friends helped lead and were present for the strike wave that occurred all over the United States and the world. While we have consistently been involved in labor struggles such as those of transit workers in DC, PLP organizers and friends must struggle to further enmesh ourselves in these struggles and push for a communist understanding of labor fightback, along with calling for better wages or benefits for workers.

We have fought back against the bosses' infectious racism. From supporting Kingsborough Community College (KCC) students organizing against anti-Arab racism, to demonstrating in Springfield against anti-Haitian racist propaganda, to standing with tenants fighting racist landlords in Lennox, California, the Party has consistently prioritized the fight against racism. Whether it's marking 555 days of fightback for justice for Tyrone West, or keeping the memory of Alex Flores, Shantel Davis, and too many others alive, our dedication remains strong in the protracted struggle to build a classless, antiracist, and antisexist society under the communist banner of the PLP.

The election of Donald Trump shows that gutter racism remains one of the bosses' most effective tools and only a communist party committed to the fight will be able to defeat racism.

Two standout moments this year were of course when we stood side by side with PL'ers, friends of the Party and workers at May Day and when the Party went to Chicago to join in the protests against the Democratic National Convention. While these demonstrations and large gatherings of friends and comrades help reinvigorate us we must also remind ourselves throughout the year that we should always be pushing to bring more workers to May Day to show them that workers can be won over to communism. We must always be showing workers that voting for any politician is a vote for our own oppressors.

A step toward fascism

Fascism is the unconcealed use of state power by the capitalist state and its allies to attack workers and their movements. Bosses use fascism when their "democratic" system doesn't get them what they want. While the election of Donald Trump will likely usher in new fascist policies such as using the military to detain and deport millions of immigrant workers, fascism was already on the rise regardless before he was elected. With inter-imperialist rivalry heating up the U.S. bosses know that China and its allies have a clear advantage in that they have a more disciplined and obedient working class and a united ruling class. The U.S. bosses will continue to ramp up fascist policies as their sham democracy fails to preserve their empire.

In 2024 we saw the bosses use the police to tear down the encampments of workers protesting genocide, quietly set up "cop cities" across the country, murder workers like Murod Kurdi, Jean Carlos Martinez Rivero, Win Rozario, Sonya Massey, and Samuel Sharpe, and are threatening to cut funding (taken from workers pockets!) to healthcare and education. It is important to remember that these are conditions that workers around the world, and many in the United States, are already exposed to on a daily basis because fascism is baked into capitalism. Fascism will only increase as World War III approaches, climate catastrophe heats up, and other capitalist-created crises emerge.

2025: Year of the working class

We must dedicate ourselves more than ever to building the Party and adapting to new fascist conditions in the new year. If we are going to be victorious when the bosses try to send hundreds of millions of workers to their deaths during a new world war and climate disasters, we must expose the capitalist snakes for who they are and mobilize workers into fighting for their own class. Here's to 2025, a year of the working class! Join PLP!

WRITE FOR CHALLENGE!

CHALLENGE strives to be the communist paper for and by the international working class. We call on all readers, supporters, and comrades to submit class struggle articles, analytical pieces, original photos and graphics, letters, and political cartoons.

The next deadline is night of Friday,December 27

Send to desafio.challenge@gmail.com. For some guidance and house style rules, please go to www.bit.ly/338ZJow

All submissions are open to collective discussion, struggle, and change. See sidebar on page 2 about fighting for collectivity and against a cult of the individual.

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